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ART. III. — *Mantova e Sua Provincia, per l'Avvocato* BARTOLOMEO ARRIGHI. [Section of the work entitled: *Grande Illustrazione del Lombardo-Veneto, ossia Storia delle Città, dei Borghi, Comuni, Castelli, etc., fino ai Tempi moderni. Per Cura di* CESARE CANTU, *e d' altri Literati.* Milano. 1859.]

IN that desperate depth of Hell where Dante beholds the Diviners doomed to pace with backward-twisted faces, and turn forever on the past the rainy eyes once bent too daringly on the future, the sweet guide of the Tuscan poet points out among the damned the daughter of a Theban king, and discourses to his charge: —

Manto was she : through many lands she went
 Seeking, and paused where I was born, at last.
 Therefore I choose thou be on me intent
 A little. When from life her father passed,
 And they of Bacchus' city became slaves,
 Long time about the world the daughter cast.
 Up in fair Italy is a lake that laves
 The feet of Alps that lock in Germany :
 Benaco called.
 And Peschiera in strong harness sits
 To front the Brescians and Bergamo,
 Where one down-curving shore the other meets.
 There all the gathered waters outward flow
 That may not in Benaco's bosom rest,
 And down through pastures green a river go.
 Soon as the current southward turns the crest,
 Benaco no more, but Mincio we know
 As far as to Governo, where, its quest
 Ended at last, it falls into the Po.
 But far it has not sought before a plain
 It finds and floods, out-creeping wide and slow
 To be the steaming summer's offence and bane.
 Here passing by, the fierce, unfriendly maid
 Saw land in the middle of the sullen main,
 Wild and unpeopled, and here, unafraid
 Of human neighborhood, she made her lair,
 Rested, and with her menials wrought her trade,
 And lived, and left her empty body there.
 Then the sparse people that were scattered near
 Gathered upon that island, everywhere

Compassed about with swamps and kept from fear.
They built their city above the witch's grave,
And for her sake that first made dwelling there
The name of Mantua to their city gave.

To this account of the first settlement of Mantua, Virgil adds a warning to his charge to distrust all other histories of the city's foundation ; and Dante is so thoroughly persuaded of its truth, that he declares all other histories shall be to him as so many lifeless embers. Nevertheless, divers chroniclers of Mantua reject the tradition here given as fabulous ; and the carefullest and most ruthless of these traces the city's origin, not to the unfriendly maid, but to the Etruscan King Ocnò, fixing the precise date of its foundation at thirty years before the Trojan war, one thousand five hundred and thirty-nine years after the creation of the world, three hundred years before Rome, and nine hundred and fifteen years after the flood, while Abimelech was judge in Israel. "And whoever," says the compiler of the "*Flower of the Mantuan Chronicles*," (it is a very dry and musty flower, indeed,) citing doughty authorities for all his facts and figures, — "whoever wishes to understand this more curiously, let him read the said authors, and he will be satisfied."

But we are as little disposed to unsettle the reader's faith in the Virgilian tradition, as to part with our own ; and we therefore uncandidly hold back the names of the authorities cited. This tradition was in fact the only thing concerning Mantuan history present to our thoughts as we rode toward the city, one afternoon of a pleasant Lombard spring ; and when we came in sight of the ancient hold of sorcery, with the languid waters of its lagoons lying sick at its feet, we recognized at least the topographical truth of Virgil's description. But old and mighty walls now surround the spot which Manto found sterile and lonely in the heart of the swamp formed by the Mincio, no longer Benaco ; and the dust of the witch is multitudinously hidden under the edifices of a city whose mighty domes, towers, and spires make its approach one of the stateliest in the world. It is a prospect on which you may dwell long as you draw toward the city, for the road from the railway station winds through some two miles of flat meadow-land before it reaches

the gate of the stronghold which the Italians call the first hope of the winner of the land, and the last hope of the loser of Italy. Indeed, there is no haste in any of the means of access to Mantua. It lies scarce forty miles south of Verona, and you are three hours in journeying this distance in the placid railway train,—a distance which Romeo, returning to Verona from his exile in Mantua, no doubt travelled in less time. There is abundant leisure to study the scenery on the way; but it scarcely repays perusal, for it lacks the beauty of the usual Lombard landscape. The soil is red, stony, and sterile; the orchard-trees are scant and slender, and not wedded with the caressing vines which elsewhere in North Italy garland happier trees and stretch gracefully from trunk to trunk. Especially the landscape looks sad and shabby about the little village of Villafranca, where the dejected prospect seemed incapable of a smile even in spring; as if it had lost all hope and cheerfulness since the peace was made which confirmed Venetia to the alien. It said as plainly as real estate could express the national sentiment, “Come si fa? Ci vuol pazienza!” and crept sullenly out of sight, as our pensive train resumed its meditative progress. No doubt this poor landscape *was* imbued, in its dull, earthy way, with a feeling that the coming of Garibaldi would irrigate and fertilize it into a paradise; as at Venice the gondoliers believe that his army would bring in its train cheap wine and hordes of rich and helpless Englishmen bent on perpetual tours of the Grand Canal without understanding as to price.

But within and without, Mantua is a strong argument against possibility of change in the political condition of this part of Italy. Compassed about by the corruption of the swamps and the sluggish breadth of the river, the city is no less mighty in her artificial defences than in this natural strength of her position; and the Croats of her garrison are as frequent in her sad, handsome streets, as the priests in Rome. Three lakes secure her from approach upon the east, north, and south; on the west is a vast intrenched camp, which can be flooded at pleasure from one of the lakes; while the water runs three fathoms deep at the feet of the solid brick walls all round the city. There are five gates giving access by drawbridges from the town to the fortified posts on every side, and commanding with their guns

the roads that lead to them. The outlying forts, with the citadel, are four in number, and are each capable of holding from two to three thousand men. The intrenched camp, for cavalry and artillery, and the barracks of the city itself, can receive a garrison of from thirty to forty thousand men; and the measureless depths of the air are full of the fever that fights in defence of Mantua, and serves with equal zeal whoever is master of the place, let him be French, Italian, or Austrian, so only that he have an unacclimated enemy before him.

The writer of this article confesses that little of this formidable military knowledge burdened him on the occasion of his visit to Mantua, and he has already confessed that he was but very imperfectly informed of the history of the city. But indeed, if the reader dealt candidly with himself, how much could *he* profess to know of Mantuan history? The ladies all have some erudite associations with the place as giving the term of *mantua-making* to the art of dress, and most persons have heard that Mantua's law was once death to any he that uttered mortal drugs there, and that the place is now an Austrian fortress on the Mincio, a stream famous in New York journalism for its elbows. Of Giulio Romano, and his works in Mantua, a good many have heard; and there is something known to the reader of the punctuated edition of Browning about Sordello. But of the Gonzagas of Mantua, and their duchy, what do you know, gentle reader?

For ourselves, when in Mantua, we tried to make a virtue of our want of information, and fancied that a sort of general ignorance was more favorable to our enjoyment of what we saw there, than thorough acquaintance with the city's history would have been. It certainly enabled us to accept all the poetic fictions of the custodians, and to embroider with their pleasing improbabilities the business-like succinctness of the guide-books; to make out of the twilight which involved all impressions a misty and heroic picture of the Mantuan past, wherein her great men appeared with a stately and gigantic uncertainty of outline, and mixed with dim scenes of battle, intrigue, and riot, and were gone before Fact could lay her finger on any shape, and swear that it was called so, and did so and so. But even if there had been neither pleasure nor profit in this ignorance, the means

of dispelling it are so scant in modern literature that it might well have been excused in a far more earnest traveller. The difficulty, indeed, which we afterwards experienced in trying to learn something of Mantua, is our best excuse for writing of its history here. We fancy that the few recent books on the subject are not in the hands of most readers, and we have a comforting belief that scarcely a reader of ours has been a reader of the *Grande Illustrazione del Lombardo-Veneto*. Yet we suppose that he forms some notion of this work from its title, and figures to himself a physical bulk of six volumes, — large, abounding in ill-printed wood-cuts, and having the appalling features which repel our race from pictorial history-books generally. There is something dry and second-rate, it must be confessed, in most things that come from the hand of Cesare Cantù, one of the most prominent of modern Italian writers. It would be hard to name all the kinds of books which he has written, and it would be awful to number them. He began with poetry, and made some romances, or *novelle*, about the time when the school of Manzonian poets flourished at Milan ; and he afterwards suffered one of those imprisonments with which Austria has fostered literary talent in Italy, and during his incarceration wrote one of the most popular historical novels in Italian literature, — the *Margherita Pusterla*. Afterwards came criticisms, essays, biographies, and chiefly histories, in countless volumes, — a Universal History, a History of the Italians, a History of Italian Literature. All these books have a certain interest and a certain worth, and may be partially read ; but none that we have read is first-rate. They are written with a degree of enlightenment just short of liberality, and are full of the information which is the material of history and not history. In like manner, the author himself falls short of excellence : he is all that intense admiration of Manzoni can make a man in literature, and nothing more ; in politics he is a man of good principles but narrow sympathies ; he is a patriot limited by Papistry, and was one of the few prominent members of the Italian Parliament who last winter openly exulted in the defeat of the measure to abolish monastic establishments in Italy.

The *Grande Illustrazione del Lombardo-Veneto* includes no-

tice of all those dear and famous cities of North Italy which we know, — of Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Venice, Mantua, Modena, Brescia, Bergamo, and the rest ; but here we have only to do with the part which concerns Mantua. This is written by the advocate Bartolomeo Arrighi, whose ingenious avoidance of all that might make his theme attractive could not be sufficiently celebrated here, and may therefore be left to the reader's fancy. There is little in his paper to leaven statistical heaviness ; and in recounting one of the most picturesque histories, he contrives to give merely a list of the events and a diagram of the scenes. Whatever illustrated character in princes or people he carefully excludes, and the raciness of anecdote and the flavor of manner and epoch distil not into his compilation from the elder historiographers. We have therefore to go back, in our present purpose, to the authors whose substance he has desiccated, and with their help, and that of one or two antiquated authors of this century, we shall try to rehabilitate the ducal state of Mantua,

“ Which was an image of the mighty world,”

and present some shadow of its microcosmal life. The story has the completeness of a tragedy ; but it runs over many centuries, and it ends like a farce, though it ends with a death. One feels, indeed, almost as great satisfaction in the catastrophe as the Mantuans themselves, who terminated their national existence and parted from their last Duke with something like exultation.

As we recall our own impressions of the city, we doubt if any good or bad fortune could rouse her to such positive emotion now. She seemed sunken, that dull April evening of our visit, into an abiding lethargy ; as if perfect repose, and oblivion from the many-troubled past, — from the renown of all former famine, fire, intrigue, slaughter, and sack, — were to be preferred by the ghost of a once populous and haughty capital to the most splendid memories of national life. Certainly, the phantom of bygone Mantuan greatness did not haunt the idle tourists who strolled through her wide streets, enjoying their quiet beauty and regularity, and finding them, despite their empty, melancholy air, full of something that reminded of home.

Coming from a land where there is a vast deal of length, breadth, and rectitude in streets, as well as human nature, they could not, of course, feel that wonder in the Mantuan avenues which inspired a Venetian ambassador, two centuries since, to write the *Serenest Senate* in praise of their marvellous extent and straightness; but they were still conscious of a certain expansive difference from Gothic Verona and narrow Venice. The windows of the ground-floors were grated to the prison-like effect common throughout Italy; but people evidently lived upon the ground-floors, and at many of the iron-barred windows fair young prisoners sat and looked out upon the streets, or laughed and chatted together. About the open doorways, moreover, people lounged, gossiping; and the interiors of the entry-halls, as they appeared to the passing glance, were clean, and had not that forbidding, inhospitable air characteristic of most house-entrances in North Italy. But sculptured Venice and Verona had unfitted the travellers for pleasure in the stucco of Mantua; and they had an immense scorn for the large and beautiful palaces of which the before-quoted ambassador speaks, because they found them faced with cunningly-moulded plaster instead of carven stone. Nevertheless, they could not help a kind of half-tender respect for the old town. It shares the domestic character of its scenes with the other ducal cities, Modena, Parma, and Ferrara; and this character is, perhaps, proper to all long and intensely municipalized communities. But Mantua has a ghostly calm wholly its own; and this was not in the least broken that evening by chatters at thresholds, and pretty laughers at grated windows. It was very, very quiet. Perhaps half a score of carriages rumbled by us in our long walk, and we met some scattered promenaders. But for the most part the streets were quite empty; and even in the chief piazza, where there was still some belated show of buying and selling, and about the doors of the cafés, where there was a good deal of languid loafing, there was no indecency of noise or bustle. There were visibly few people in the place, and it was in decay; but it was not squalid in its lapse. The streets were scrupulously neat and clean, and the stuccoed houses were all painted of that pale saffron hue which gives such unquestionable respectability to New England towns. Before

we returned to our lodgings, Mantua had turned into twilight ; and we walked homeward through a placid and dignified gloom, nowhere broken by the flare of gas, and only remotely affected, here and there, by the light of lamps of oil, faintly twinkling in a disheartened Mantuan fashion.

If you turn this pensive light upon the yellow pages of those old chronicles of which we spoke, it reveals pictures fit to raise both pity and wonder for the past of this city,— pictures full of the glory of struggles for freedom, of the splendor of wise princes, of the comfort of a prosperous and contented people, of the grateful fruits of protected arts and civilization ; but likewise stained with images of unspeakable filth and wickedness, baseness and cruelty, incredible shame, suffering, and sin.

Long before the birth of Christ, the Gauls drive out the Etruscans from Mantua, and aggrandize and beautify the city, to be in their turn expelled by the Romans, under whom Mantua again waxes strong and fair. In this time, the wife of a farmer not far from the city dreams a marvellous dream of bringing forth a laurel-bough, and in due time bears into the world the chiefest of all Mantuans, with a smile upon his face. This is a poet, and they call his name Virgil. He goes from his native city to Rome, when ripe for glory, and has there the good fortune to win back his father's farm, which the greedy veterans of Augustus, then settled in the Cremonese, had annexed to the spoils bestowed upon them by the Emperor. Later in this Roman time, and only three years after the death of Him whom the poet all but prophesied, another grand event marks an epoch in Mantuan history. According to the pious legend, the soldier Longinus, who pierced the side of Christ as he hung upon the cross, has been converted by a miracle : wiping away that costly blood from his spear-head, and then drawing his hand across his eyes, he is suddenly healed of his near-sightedness, and stricken with the full wonder of conviction. He gathers anxiously the precious drops of blood from his weapon into the phial from which the vinegar mixed with gall was poured, and, forsaking his life of soldier, he wanders with his new-won faith and his priceless treasure to Mantua, where it is destined to work famous miracles, and to be the most valued possession of the city to all after-time. The saint

himself, preaching the Gospel of Christ, suffers martyrdom under Tiberius ; his tongue is cut out, and his body is burnt ; and his ashes are buried at Mantua, forgotten, and found again in after ages with due signs and miraculous portents. The Romans give a civil tranquillity to Mantua ; but it is not till three centuries after Christ that the persecutions of the Christians cease. Then the temples of the gods are thrown down, and churches are built ; and the city goes forward to share the destinies of the Christianized empire, and be spoiled by the barbarians. In 407 the Goths take it, and the Vandals in their turn sack and waste it, and scatter its people, who return again after the storm, and rebuild their city. Attila, marching to destroy it, is met at Governo (as you see in Raphael's fresco in the Vatican) by Pope Leo I., who conjures him to spare the city, and threatens him with Divine vengeance if he refuse ; above the pontiff's head two wrathful angels, bearing drawn swords, menace the Hun with death if he advance ; and, thus miraculously admonished, he turns aside from Mantua and spares it. The citizens successfully resist an attack of Alboin ; but the Lombards afterwards, unrestrained by the visions of Attila, beat the Mantuans and take the city. From the Lombards the Greeks, sent thither by the Exarch of Ravenna, captured Mantua about the end of the sixth century ; and then, the Lombards turning immediately to besiege it again, the Greeks defend their prize long and valiantly, but in the end are overpowered. They are allowed to retire with their men and arms to Ravenna, and the Lombards dismantle the city.

Concerning our poor Mantua under Lombard rule there is but little known, except that she went to war with the Cremonese ; and it may be fairly supposed that she was, like her neighbors, completely involved in foreign and domestic discords of every kind. That war with the Cremonese was about the possession of the river Ollio ; and the Mantuans came off victors in it, slaying immense numbers of the enemy, and taking some thousands of them prisoners, whom their countrymen ransomed on condition of building one of the gates of Mantua with materials from the Cremonese territory, and mortar mixed with water from the disputed Ollio. The reader easily conceives how bitter a pill this must have been for the high-toned Cremonese gentlemen of that day.

When Charlemagne made himself master of Italy, the Mantuan lands and Mantuan men were divided up among the brave soldiers who had helped to enslave the country. These warriors of Charlemagne became counts; and the *contadini*, or inhabitants of each *contado* (county), became absolutely dependent on their will and pleasure. It is recorded (to the confusion of those who think primitive barbarism is virtue) that the corruption of those rude and brutal old times was great, that all classes were sunk in vice, and that the clergy were especially venal and abominable. After the death of Charlemagne, in the ninth century, wars broke out all over Italy between the factions supporting different aspirants to his power; and we may be sure that Mantua had some share in the common quarrel. As we have found no explicit record of this period, we distribute to the city, as her portion of the calamities, at least two sieges, one capture and sack, and a decimation by famine and pestilence. We certainly read that, fifty years later, the Emperor Rudolph attacked it with his Hungarians, took it, pillaged it, and put great part of its people to the sword. During the siege, some pious Mantuans had buried (to save them from the religious foe) the blood of Christ, and part of the sponge which had held the gall and vinegar, together with the body of St. Longinus. Most unluckily, however, these excellent men were put to the sword, and all knowledge of the place of sepulture perished with them.

At the end of these wars Mantua received a lord, by appointment of the Emperor, and the first lord's son married the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine, from which union was born the great Countess Matilda. Boniface was the happy bridegroom's name, and the wedding had a wild splendor and profuse barbaric jollity about it, which it is pleasant enough to read of after so much cutting and slashing. The viands were passed round on horseback to the guests, and the horses were shod with silver shoes loosely nailed on, that they might drop off and be scrambled for by the people. Oxen were roasted whole, as at a Kentucky barbecue; and wine was drawn from wells with buckets hung on silver chains. It was the first great display of that magnificence of which after princes of Mantua were so fond; and the wretched hinds out of whose sweat it came no doubt thought it very fine.

Of course Lord Boniface had his wars. There was a plot to depose him discovered in Mantua, and the plotters fled to Verona. Boniface demanded them; but the Veronese answered stoutly that theirs was a free city, and no man should be taken from it against his will. Boniface marched to attack them; and the Veronese were such fools as to call the Duke of Austria to their aid, promising submission to his government in return for his help. It was then that Austria first put her finger into the Italian *pasticcio*, where she has kept it ever since. But the Austrian governor whom the Duke set over the Veronese made himself intolerable, — the Austrian governor always does, — and they drove him out of the city. On this the Duke turns about, unites with Boniface, takes Verona, and sacks it.

An altogether pleasanter incident of Boniface's domination was the miraculous discovery of the sacred relics, buried and lost during the sack of Mantua by the Hungarians. The place of sepulture was revealed thrice to a blind pauper in a dream. People dug where he bade them and found the relics. Immediately on its exhumation the Blood wrought innumerable miracles; and the fame of it grew so great, that the Pope came to see it, attended by such concourse of the people that they were obliged to sleep in the streets. It was an age that threw the mantle of exterior devotion and laborious penances and pilgrimages over the most hideous crimes and unnatural sins. But perhaps the poor believers who slept in the streets of Mantua on that occasion were none the worse for their faith, when the Pope pronounced the Blood genuine and blessed it. We are sure that for some days of enthusiasm they abstained from the violence of war, and paused a little in that career of vice and wickedness of which one reads in Italian history, with the full conviction that Sodom and Gomorrah also were facts, and not merely allegory. We have no doubt the blind beggar believed that Heaven had revealed to him the place where the Blood was buried, that the Pope believed in the verity of the relic, and that the devout multitudes were helped and uplifted in their gross faith by this visible witness to the truth that Christ had died for them upon the bloody tree. Poor souls! they had much to contend with in the way to any good. The leaven of the old pleasure-making pagan civilization was in

them yet (it is in the Italians to this day); and centuries of Northern invasion had made them fierce and cruel, without teaching them Northern virtues. Nay, we question much if their invaders had so many rugged virtues to teach as some people would have us think. They seem to have liked well the sweet corruptions of the land and the studied debaucheries of ages of sin, and to have enjoyed them as furiously and clumsily as bears do the hoarded honey of civilized bees.

After the death of Boniface the lordship of Mantua fell to his famous daughter, Matilda, of whom most have heard. She was a woman of strong will and strong mind: she held her own, and rent from others with a mighty hand, till she had united nearly all Lombardy under her rule. She was not much given to the domestic affections; she had two husbands (successively), and, if the truth must be told, divorced them both,—one because he wished to share her sovereignty, perhaps usurp it, and the other because he was not warm enough friend of religion. She had no children, and, indeed, in her last marriage contract it was expressly provided that the spouses were to live in chastity together, and as much asunder as possible, Matilda having scruples. She was a great friend to learning,—founded libraries, established the law schools at Bologna, caused the codification of the canon law, corresponded with distant nations, and spoke all the different languages of her soldiers. More than literature, however, she loved the Church; and fought on the side of Pope Gregory VII. in his wars with the Emperor Henry IV. Henry therefore took Mantua from her in 1091, and up to the year 1111 the city enjoyed a kind of republican government under his protection. In that year Henry made peace with Matilda, and appointed her his vice-regent in Italy; but the Mantuans, after twenty years of freedom, were in no humor to feel the weight of the mailed hand of this strong-minded lady. She was then, moreover, nigh to her death; and, hearing that her physicians had given her up, the Mantuans refused submission. The great Countess rose irefully from her death-bed, and, gathering her army, led it in person, as she always did, laid siege to Mantua by land and water, entered the city in 1114, and did not die till a year after. Such is female resolution.

The Mantuans now founded a republican government, having unlimited immunities and privileges from the Emperor, whose power over them extended merely to the investiture of their consuls. Their republic was democratic, the legislative council of nine rectors and three curators being elective by the whole people. This government, or something like it, endured for more than a century, during which period the Mantuans seem to have done nothing but war with their neighbors in every direction, — with the Veronese chiefly, with the Cremonese a good deal, with the Paduans, with the Ferrarese, with the Modenese and the Bolognese: indeed, we count up twelve of these wars. Like the English of their time, the Mantuans were famous bowmen, and their shafts took flight all over Lombardy. At the same time they did not omit to fight each other at home; and it must have been a dullish kind of day in Mantua when there was no street-battle between families of the factious nobility. Dante has peopled his Hell from the Italy of this time, and he might have gone farther and fared worse for a type of the infernal state. The spectacle of these countless little Italian powers, racked, and torn, and blazing with pride, aggression, and disorder, within and without, — full of intrigue, anguish, and shame, — each with its petty chief or victorious faction making war upon the other, and bubbling over with local ambitions, personal rivalries and lusts, — is a spectacle which the traveller of to-day, passing over the countless forgotten battle-fields, and hurried from one famous city to another by railroad, can scarcely conjure up. Parma, Modena, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, Mantua, Vicenza, Verona, Bassano, — all are now at peace with each other, and firmly united in the national sentiment that travellers were meant to be eaten alive by Italians. Poor old cities! it is hard to conceive of their bygone animosities; still harder to believe that all the villages squatting on the long white roads, and waking up to beg of you as your diligence passes, were once embroiled in deadly and incessant wars, and hated each other with the Christian cordiality which now marks the feeling between the English and ourselves. Municipal pride is a good thing, and decentralization is well; and we have to thank these intensely local little states for genius triply crowned with the glories of literature, art,

and science, which Italy might not have produced if she had been united, and if the little states had loved themselves less and Italy more. Though, after all, there is the doubt whether it is not better to bless one's obscure and happy children with peace and safety, than to give the world a score of great names at the cost to millions of incalculable misery.

Besides their local wars and domestic feuds the Mantuans had troubles on a much larger scale, — troubles, indeed, which the Emperor Barbarossa laid out for all Italy. In Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great you can read a pleasanter account of the Emperor's business at Roncaglia about this time than our Italian chroniclers will give you. Carlyle loves a tyrant; and if the tyrant is a ruffian and bully, and above all a German, there are hardly any lengths to which that candid historian will not go in praise of him. Truly, one would hardly guess, from that picture of Frederick Redbeard at Roncaglia, with the standard set before his tent, inviting all men to come and have justice done them, that the Emperor was actually at Roncaglia for the purpose of conspiring with his Diet to take away all vestiges of liberty and independence from miserable Italy. Among other cities Mantua lost her freedom at this diet, and was ruled by an imperial governor and by consuls of Frederick's nomination till 1167, when she joined the famous Lombard League against him. The leagued cities beat the Emperor at Legnano, and received back their liberties by the treaty of Costanza in 1183; after which, Frederick having withdrawn to Germany, they fell to fighting among themselves again with redoubled zeal, and rent their league into as many pieces as there had been parties to it. In 1236 the Germans again invaded Lombardy, under Frederick II.; and aided by the troops of the Ghibelline cities, Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and Treviso, as well as ten thousand Saracen archers, besieged Mantua, which surrendered to this formidable union of forces, thus becoming once more an imperial city, and irreparably fracturing the Lombard League. It does not appear, however, that her ancient liberties were withdrawn by Frederick II.; and we read that the local wars went on after this with as little interruption as before. The wars went on as usual, and on the old terms with Verona and Cremona, and there is little in their history

to interest us. But in 1256 the famous tyrant of Padua, Eccelino da Romano, who aspired to the dominion of all Lombardy, gathered his forces and went and sat down before Mantua. The Mantuans refused to surrender at his summons; and Eccelino, who had very little notion of what the Paduans were doing in his absence, swore that he would cut down the vines in those pleasant Mantuan vineyards, plant new ones, and drink the wine of their grapes before ever he raised the siege. But meantime that conspiracy which ended in Eccelino's ruin had declared itself in Padua, and the tyrant was forced to abandon the siege and look to his dominion of other cities.

After which there was something like peace in Mantua for twenty years, and the city waxed prosperous. Indeed, neither industry nor learning had wholly perished during the wars of the republic, and the people built grist-mills on the Mincio and cultivated belles-lettres to some degree. Men of heavier science likewise flourished, and we read of jurists and astronomers born in those troublous days, as well as of a distinguished physician, who wrote a ponderous dictionary of simples, and dedicated it to King Robert of Naples. But by far the greatest Mantuan of this time was he of whom readers have heard something from a modern poet. He is the haughty Lombard soul, "in the movement of the eyes honest and slow," whom Dante, ascending the inexplicable heights of Purgatory, beheld; and who, summoning all himself, leaped to the heart of Virgil when he named Mantua: "O Mantuan! I am Sordello, of thine own land!"

Of Virgil the superstition of the Middle Ages had made a kind of wizard, and of Sordello the old writers fable all manner of wonders; he is both knight and poet, and has adventures scarcely less surprising than those of Amadis of Gaul. It is pretty nearly certain that he was born in 1189 of the Visconti di Goito, in the Mantuan country, and that he married Beatrice, a sister of Eccelino, and had amours with the youngest sister of this tyrant, the pretty Cunizza, whom Dante places in his *Paradiso*. This final disposition of Cunizza, whom we should hardly think now of assigning a place among the blest, surprised some people even in that day, it seems; for an old commentator defends it, saying: "Cunizza was always, it is

true, tender and amorous, and properly called a daughter of Venus ; but she was also compassionate, benign, and merciful toward those unhappy ones whom her brother cruelly tormented. Therefore the poet is right in feigning to find her in the sphere of Venus. *For if the gentle Cyprians deified their Venus, and the Romans their Flora, how much more honestly may a Christian poet save Cunizza.*" The lady, whose salvation is on these grounds inexpugnably accomplished, was married to Count Sanbonifazio of Padua, in her twenty-fourth year ; and Sordello was early called to this nobleman's court, having already given proofs of his poetic genius. He fell in love with Cunizza, whom her lord, becoming the enemy of the Eccelini, began to ill-treat. A curious glimpse into the manners and morals of that day is afforded by the fact, that the brothers of Cunizza conspired to effect her escape with Sordello from her husband's court, and that, under the protection of Eccelino da Romano, the lovers were left unmolested to their amours. Eccelino, indeed, loved this weak sister with extraordinary tenderness, and we read of a marvellous complaisance to her amorous intrigues by a man who cared nothing himself for women. Cunizza lived in one of her brother's palaces at Verona, and used to receive there the visits of Sordello after Eccelino had determined to separate them. The poet entered the palace by a back door, to reach which he must pass through a very filthy alley ; and a servant was stationed there to carry Sordello to and fro upon his back. One night Eccelino took the servant's place, bore the poet to the palace door, and on his return carried him back to the mouth of the alley, where he revealed himself, to the natural surprise and pain of Sordello, who could have reasonably expected anything but the mild reproof and warning given him by his truculent brother-in-law : "Ora ti basti, Sordello. Non venir più per questa vile strada ad opere ancor più vili." — "Let this suffice thee, Sordello. Come no more by this vile path to deeds still viler."

It was probably after this amour ended that Sordello sat out upon his travels, visiting most courts, and dwelling long in Provence, where he learned to poetize in the Provençal tongue, in which he thereafter chiefly wrote, and composed many songs. He did not, however, neglect his Lombard language, but com-

posed in it a treatise on the art of defending towns. The Mantuan historian, Volta, says that some of Sordello's Provençal poems exist in manuscript in the Vatican and Chigi libraries at Rome, in the Laurentian at Florence, and the Estense at Modena. He was versed in arms as well as letters, and he caused Mantua to be surrounded with fosses five miles beyond her walls; and the republic having lodged sovereign powers in his hands when Eccelino besieged the city, Sordello conducted the defence with great courage and ability, and did not at all betray the place to his obliging brother-in-law, as the latter expected. Verçi, from whose "History of the Eccelini" we have drawn the account of Sordello's intrigue with Cunizza, says: "The writers represent this Sordello as the most polite, the most gentle, the most generous man of his time, of middle stature, of beautiful aspect and fine person, of lofty bearing, agile and dexterous, instructed in letters, and a good poet, as his Provençal poems manifest. To these qualities he united military valor in such degree that no knight of his time could stand before him." He was properly the first lord of Mantua, and the republic seems to have died with him in 1284.

The madness which comes upon a people about to be enslaved commonly makes them the agents of their own undoing. The time had now come for the destruction of the last vestiges of liberty in Mantua, and the Mantuans, in their assembly of the Four Hundred and Ninety, voted full power into the hands of the destroyer. That Pinamonte Bonacolsi whom Dante mentions in the twentieth canto of the *Inferno* had been elected captain of the republic, and, feigning to fear aggression from the Marquis of Ferrara, he demanded of the people the right to banish all enemies of the state. This reasonable demand was granted, and the captain banished, as is well known, all enemies of Pinamonte Bonacolsi. After that, having things his own way, he began to favor public tranquillity, abolished family feuds and the ancient amusement of street-battles, and, like Louis Napoleon, led his enslaved country in the paths of material prosperity; for which he was no doubt lauded in his day by those who thought the Mantuans were not prepared for freedom. He resolved to make the captaincy of the republic hereditary in the Bonacolsi family; and when he died, in 1293,

his power descended to his son Bordellone. This Bordellone seems to have been a generous and merciful captain enough, but he loved ease and pleasure; and a rough nephew of his, Guido Botticella, conspired against him to that degree that Bordellone thought best, for peace and quietness' sake, to abdicate in his favor. Guido had the customary war with the Marquis of Ferrara, and then died, and was succeeded by his brother Passerino, a very bad person, whose son at last brought his whole family to grief. The Emperor made him vicar of Modena; and he used the Modenese very cruelly, and shut up Francesco Pico and his sons in a tower, where he starved them, as the Pisans did Ugolino. In those days, also, the Pope was living at Avignon, and people used to send him money and other comforts there out of Italy. An officer of Passerino's, being of Ghibelline politics, attacked one of these richly laden emissaries, and took his spoils, dividing them with honest Passerino. For this the Pope naturally excommunicated the captain of Mantua, and thereupon his neighbors made a great deal of pious war upon him. But he beat the Bolognese, the most pious of his foes, near Montevoglio, and with his Modenese took from them that famous bucket, about which Tassone made his great Bernesque epic, *The Rape of the Bucket* (*La Secchia Rapita*), and which still hangs in the tower of the Duomo at Modena. Meantime, while Passerino had done everything to settle himself comfortably and permanently in the tyranny of Mantua, his worthless son Francesco fell in love with the wife of Filippino Gonzaga.

According to the old Mantuan chronicles the Gonzagas were of a royal German line, and had fixed themselves in the Mantuan territory in 770, where they built a castle beyond Po, and began at once to take part in public affairs. They had now grown to be a family of such consequence that they could not be offended with impunity, and it was a great misfortune to the Bonacolsi that Francesco happened to covet Filippino Gonzaga's wife. As to the poor lady herself, it is of infinite consequence to her eternal health whether she was guilty or no; but to us still on earth, it seems scarcely worth while to inquire, after so great lapse of time. History, however, rather favors the notion of her innocence; and it is said that Francesco, unable to

overcome her virtue, took away her good fame by evil reports. At the same time he was greatly wroth — it is scarcely possible to write seriously of these ridiculous, wicked old shadows — that this lady's husband should have fallen in love with a pretty concubine of his, Bonacolsi's; and, after publicly defaming Filippino's wife, he threatened to kill him for this passion. The insult and the menace sank deep into the bitter hearts of the Gonzagas; and the head of that proud race, Filippino's uncle, Luigi Gonzaga, resolved to avenge the family dishonor. He was a secret and taciturn man, and a pious adulator of his line has praised him for the success with which he dissembled his hatred of the Bonacolsi, while conspiring to sweep them and their dominion away. He won over adherents among the Mantuans, and then made a league with Can Grande of Verona to divide the spoils of the Bonacolsi; and so, one morning, having bribed the guards to open the city gates, he entered Mantua at the head of the banded forces. The population was roused with patriotic cries of "Long live the Mantuan people!" and, as usual, believed, poor souls, that some good was meant them by those who came to overthrow their tyrants. The Bonacolsi were dreaming that pleasant morning of anything but ruin, and they made no resistance to the insurrection till it burst out in the great square before the Castello di Corte. They then made a feeble sally from the castle, but were swiftly driven back, and Passerino, wounded to death under the great Gothic archway of the palace, as he retreated, dropped from his languid hands the bridle-rein of his charger and the reins of that government with which he had so long galled Mantua. The unhappy Francesco fled to the cathedral for protection; but the Gonzagas slew him at the foot of the altar, with tortures so hideous and incredible, that we are glad to have our heavy friend, the advocate Arrighi, deny the fact altogether. Passerino's brother, a bishop, was flung into a tower to starve, that the Picchi might be avenged; and the city of Mantua was liberated.

In that day, when you freed a city from a tyrant, you gave it up to be pillaged by the army of liberation; and Mantua was now sacked by her deliverers. Can Grande's share of the booty alone amounted to a hundred thousand gold florins

(about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars). The Mantuans, far from imitating the ungrateful Paduans, who, when the crusaders liberated them from Eccelino, grudged these brave fellows three days' pillage of their city, and even wished back their old tyrant, — the Mantuans, we say, seemed not in the least to mind being devoured, but gratefully elected the Gonzaga their captain-general, and purchased him absolution from the Pope for his crimes committed in the sack. They got this absolution for twenty thousand gold florins ; and the Pope probably sold it cheap, remembering his old grudge against the Bonacolsi, whom the Gonzaga had overthrown. All this was in the year of health 1328.

We confess that we are never weary of reading of these good, heroic, virtuous old times in Italy, and that we are here tempted to digress into declamation about them. There is no study more curious and interesting, and we are fond of tracing the two elements of character visible in Italian society, and every individual Italian, as they flow down from the remotest times to these ; — the one element, that capacity for intellectual culture of the highest degree ; the other element, that utter indomability of passion and feeling, which at this day remain as wild in the Italians as in the primitive savages. For miles after the Monongahela and the Alleghany meet to form the Ohio River, their waters flow side by side, unmixed, in the same channel ; on the left yellow and turbid, on the right blue and clear. In this anomalous Italian character the two elements have descended for ages together, without effect upon each other ; — one refulgent with a lustre that shall light up the world to the farthest verge of time ; the other thick and dark and foul with all crime and misery. Who can think without tears and wonder of him who wrote the Divine Comedy, as he stoops and gathers stones to fling at the ragged children yelling “ Ghibelline ! ” after him in the way ?

“ Evil or good may be better or worse

In the human heart, but the mixture of each

Is a marvel and a curse.”

The presence of these contradictory elements seems to influence every relation of Italian life ; — to make it capable of splendor, but barren of comfort ; to endear beauty, but not

goodness, to the Italian ; to lead him to recognize and celebrate virtues, but not to practise them ; to produce a civilization of the mind, and not of the soul.

When Luigi Gonzaga was made lord of Mantua, he left his castle beyond Po, to dwell in the city. In this castle he had dwelt, like other lords of his time, in the likeness of a king, spending regally, and keeping state and open house in an edifice strongly built about with walls, encircled with fosses passable by a single drawbridge, and guarded day and night, from castle moat to castle crest, by armed vassals. Hundreds ate daily at his board, which was heaped with a rude and rich profusion, and furnished with carven goblets and plate of gold and silver. In fair weather the banquet-hall stood open to all the winds that blew ; in foul, the guests were sheltered from the storm by curtains of oiled linen, and the place was lighted with torches borne by splendidly attired pages. The great saloons of the castle were decked with tapestries of Flanders and Damascus, and the floor was strewn with straw or rushes. The bed in which the lord and lady slept was the couch of a monarch ; the household herded together in the empty chambers, and lay upon the floor like swine. The garden-fields about the castle smiled with generous harvests ; the peasant lay down after his toil, at night, in deadly fear of invasion from some neighboring state, which should rob him of everything, dishonor his wife and daughters, and slay him upon the smoking ruins of his home.

In the city to which this lord repaired, the houses were built here and there at caprice, without numbers or regularity, and only distinguished by the figure of a saint, or some pious motto painted above the door. Cattle wandered at will through the crooked, narrow, and filthy streets, which rang with the clamor of frequent feud, and reeked with the blood of the embattled citizens ; over all the squalor and wickedness rose the loveliest temples that ever blossomed from man's love of the beautiful, to the honor and glory of God.

In this time crusaders went to take the Lord's sepulchre from the infidel, while their brothers left at home rose against one another, each petty state against its neighbor, in unsparring wars of rapine and devastation,—wars that slew, or, less

mercifully, mutilated prisoners,—that snatched the babe from the dishonored embrace of its mother, and dashed out its brains upon the desolated hearth. A hopeless, hellish time of sack, plunder, murder, famine, plague, and unnatural crime ; a glorious age, in which flourished the gentlest and sweetest poet that ever sang, and the grimmest and grandest that ever upbraided a godless generation for its sins,—in which Petrarch was crowned with laurel at Rome, and Dante wandered in despair from court to court, learning in the bitterness of his exile's heart,

“ come sa di sale

Lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle

Lo scendere e il salir per l' altrui scale.”

It was a time ignorant of simplest comfort, but debauched with the vices of luxury ; in which cities repressed the license of their people by laws regulating the length of women's gowns and the outlays at weddings and funerals. Every wild misdeed and filthy crime was committed, and punished by terrible penalties, or atoned for by fines. A fierce democracy reigned, banishing nobles, razing their palaces, and ploughing up the salt-sown sites ; till at last, in the uttermost paroxysm of madness, it delivered itself up to lords to be defended from itself, and was crushed into the abjectest depths of slavery. Literature and architecture flourished, and the sister arts were born amid the struggles of human nature convulsed with every abominable passion.

For nearly four hundred years the Gonzagas continued to rule the city, which the first prince of their line, having well-nigh destroyed, now rebuilt and restored to greater splendor than ever ; and it is the Mantua of the Gonzagas which travelers of this day look upon when they visit the famous old city. Their pride and their wealth adorned it ; their wisdom and prudence made it rich and prosperous ; their valor glorified it ; their crimes stain its annals with infamy ; their wickedness and weakness ruined it and brought it low. They were a race full of hereditary traits of magnificence, but one reads their history, and learns to love, of all their long succession, only one or two in their pride,—learns to pity only one or two in their fall. They were patriotic, but the patriotism of despotic princes is self-love. They were liberal—in spending the revenues of

the state for the glory of their family. They were brave, and led many nameless Mantuans to die in forgotten battles for alien quarrels which they never understood.

The succession of the Gonzagas was of four captains, ending in 1407; four marquises, ending in 1484; and ten dukes, ending in 1708.

The first of the captains was Luigi, as we know. In his time the great Gothic fabric of the Castello di Corte was built; and having rebuilt the portions of the city wasted by the sack, he devoted himself, as far as might be in that age, to the arts of peace; and it is remembered of him that he tried to cure the Mantuan air of its feverish unwholesomeness by draining the swampy environs. During his time, Petrarch, making a sentimental journey to the birthplace of Virgil, was splendidly entertained and greatly honored by him. For the rest, Can Grande of Verona was by no means content with his hundred thousand golden florins of spoil from the sack of the city, but aspired to its seigniory, declaring that he had understood Gonzaga to have promised him it as the condition of alliance against the Bonacolsi. Gonzaga construed the contract differently, and had so little idea of parting with his opinion, that he fought the Scaligero on this point of difference till he died, which befell thirty years after his election to the captaincy.

Him his son Guido succeeded, — a prince already old at the time of his father's death, and of feeble spirit. He shared his dominion with his son Ugolino, excluding the younger brothers from the dominion. These, indignant at the partiality, one night slew their brother Ugolino at a supper he was giving; and, being thereupon admitted to a share in their father's government, had no trouble in obtaining the pardon of the Pope and Emperor. One of the murderers died before the father; the other, named Ludovico, was, on the death of Guido, in 1370, elected to the captaincy, and ruled long, wisely, and well. He loved a peaceful life; and though the Emperor confirmed him in the honors conferred on him by the Mantuans, and made him Vicar Imperial, Ludovico declined to take part with Ghibellines against Guelphs, but remained quietly at home, and spent himself much in good works, as if he would

thus expiate his bloody crime. He gathered artists, poets, and learned men about him, and did much to foster all arts. In his time, Mantua had rest from war, and grew to have twenty-eight thousand inhabitants; but it was not in the nature of a city of the Middle Ages to be long without a calamity of some sort, and it is a kind of relief to know that Mantua, under this peaceful prince, was wellnigh depopulated by a pestilence.

In 1381 he died, and with his son Francesco the blood-letting began again. Indeed, this captain spent nearly his whole life in war with those pleasant people, the Visconti of Milan. He had married the daughter of Barnabò Visconti, but discovering her to be unfaithful to him, or believing her so, he caused her to be put to death, refusing all her family's intercessions for mercy. After that, a heavy sadness fell upon him, and he wandered aimlessly about in many Italian cities, and at last married a second time, taking to wife Margherita Malatesta. He was a prince of high and generous soul, and of manly greatness rare in his time. There came once a creature of the Visconti to him, with a plot for secretly taking off his masters; but the Gonzaga (he must have been thought an eccentric man by his neighbors) dismissed the wretch with scornful horror. We are sure the reader will be glad to know that he finally beat the Visconti in fair fight, and (the pest still raging in Mantua) lived to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When he returned, he compiled the city's statutes, divided the town into four districts, and named its streets. So he died.

And after this good Christian, brave soldier, and wise prince had made his end, there came another Francesco, or Gianfrancesco, who was created Marquis of Mantua by the Emperor Sigismund. He was a friend of war, and having been the ward of the Venetian republic, (Venice was fond of this kind of trust, and sometimes adopted princely persons as her children, among whom the reader will of course remember the Queen of Cyprus, and the charming Bianca Capello, whose personal attractions and singularly skilful knowledge of the use of poisons made her Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, some years after she eloped from Venice,) he became the leader of her armies on the death of Carmagnola, who survived the triumphant reception given him by the Serenest Senate only a

very short time.* The Gonzaga took Verona and Padua for the republic, and met the Milanese in many battles. Venice was then fat and insolently profuse with the spoils of the Orient, and it is probable that the Marquis of Mantua acquired there that taste for splendor which he introduced into his hitherto frugal little state. We read of his being in Venice in 1414, when the Jewellers' and Goldsmiths' Guild gave a tournament in the Piazza San Marco, offering as prizes to the victorious lances a collar enriched with pearls and diamonds, the work of the jewellers, and two helmets excellently wrought by the goldsmiths. On this occasion the Gonzaga, with two hundred and sixty Mantuan gentlemen, mounted on superb horses, contested the prizes with the Marquis of Ferrara, at the head of two hundred Ferrarese, equally mounted, and attended by their squires and pages, magnificently dressed. There were sixty thousand spectators of the encounter. "Both the Marquises," says Mutinelli in his *Annali Urbani*, "being each assisted by fourteen well-armed cavaliers, combated valorously at the barrier, and were both judged worthy of the first prize: a Mantuan cavalier took the second."

The Gonzaga magnificently entertained the Emperor Sigismund in Mantua, and Martin V., Pope elect, was likewise feasted there on his journey from Germany to Rome. In this time lived a certain Buonamonte Aleprandi, who wrote a history of Mantua in *terza rima*; and Gianfrancesco's reign was also adorned by the feats in arms of his kinsman, Galeazzo Gonzaga. This warrior beat all champions far and near; and once hearing tell of a braggart Frenchman named Bucicaldo, who from his place in Genoa sent out a scornful boast that he could overcome any Italian knight, Galeazzo met him and conquered him, and the Frenchman, covered with confusion, swore never to wear armor more.

* It seems scarcely worth while to recall the fact that Carmagnola, suspected of treasonable correspondence with the Visconti, was recalled to Venice to receive distinguished honors from the republic. The Senate was sitting in the hall of the Grand Council when he appeared, and they detained him there with various compliments till night fell. Then, instead of lights, the Sbirri appeared, and seized Carmagnola. "I am a dead man," he exclaimed, on beholding them. And so indeed he was, poor fellow; for, three days after, he was led out of prison, and beheaded between the pillars of the Piazzetta. St. Mark had small compassion on traitors, and never hesitated to coerce them.

The Marquis Gonzaga was the first of his line who began that royal luxury of palaces with which Mantua was adorned. He commenced the Ducal Palace; but before he went far with the work, he fell a prey to the science then much affected by Italian princes, but still awaiting its last refinement from the gifted Lucrezia Borgia. The poor Marquis was poisoned by his wife's paramour, and died in the year 1444. Against this prince, our advocate Arrighi records the vandalism of causing to be thrown down and broken in pieces the antique statue of Virgil, which stood in one of the public places of Mantua, and of which the head is still shown in the Museum of the city. In all times, the Mantuans had honored, in divers ways, their great poet, and at certain epochs had coined money bearing his face. With the common people he had a kind of worship, (more likely as wizard than as poet,) and they celebrated annually some now-forgotten event by assembling with songs and dances about the statue of Virgil, which was destroyed by the uncle of the Marquis, Malatesta, rather than by the Marquis's own order. This ill-conditioned person is supposed to have been "vexed because our Mantuan people thought it their highest glory to be fellow-citizens of the prince of poets." We can better sympathize with the advocate's indignation at this barbarity, than with his blame of Francesco for having consented, by his acceptance of the marquisate, to become a prince of the Roman Empire. Mantua was thus subjected to the Emperors, but liberty had long been extinguished; and the voluntary election of the Council, which bestowed the captaincy on each succeeding generation of the Gonzaghi, was a mere matter of form, and of course.

The next prince, Lodovico Gonzaga, was an austere man, and had been bred in a hard school, if we may believe some of our old chroniclers, whom, indeed, we sometimes suspect of being not altogether faithful. It is said that his father loved his younger brother better than him, and that Lodovico ran away in his boyhood, and took refuge with his father's hereditary enemies, the Visconti. To make dates agree, it must have been the last of these, for the line failed during Lodovico's time, and he had wars with the succeeding Sforza. In the day of his escapade, Milan was at war with Mantua and with

Venice, and the Marquis Gonzaga was at the head of the united armies, as we have already seen. So the father and son met in several battles; though the Visconti, out of love for the boy, and from a sentiment of piety somewhat amazing in them, contrived that he should never actually encounter his parent face to face. Lodovico came home after the wars, wearing a long beard; and his mother called her son The Turk, a nickname that he never lost.

Il Turco was a lover of the arts and of letters, and he did many works to enrich and beautify the city. He established the first printing-office in Mantua, where the first book printed was the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio. He founded a college of advocates, and he dug canals for irrigation; and the prosperity of Mantuan manufactures in his time may be inferred from the fact that, when the king of Denmark paid him a visit, in 1474, the merchants decked their shops with five thousand pieces of fine Mantuan cloth.

The Marquis made his brilliant little court the resort of the arts and letters; and hither from Florence came once the elegant Politian, who composed his tragedy of *Orfeo* in Mantua, and caused it to be first represented before Ludovico. But it must be confessed that this was a soil in which art flourished better than literature, and that even born-Mantuan poets went off, after a while, and blossomed in other air. The painter Mantegna, whom the Marquis invited from Padua, passed his whole life here, painting for the Marquis in the palaces and churches. The prince loved him, and gave him a house, and bestowed other honors upon him; and Mantegna executed for Ludovico his famous pictures representing the Triumph of Julius Cæsar.* It was divided into nine compartments, and, as a frieze, went round the upper part of Lodovico's newly erected palace of San Sebastian. Mantegna also painted a hall in the Castello di Corte, called the Stanza di Mantegna, and there, among other subjects of fable and of war, made the portraits of Lodovico and his wife. It was partly the wish to see such works of Mantegna as still remained in Mantua that took us thither; and it was chiefly this wish that carried us, the morn-

* Now at Hampton Court, in England.

ing after our arrival, to the Castello di Corte, or the Ducal Palace. Our thirst for Mantegnas was destined to be in no degree satisfied in this pile, but it was full of things to tempt us to forget Mantegna, and to make us more and more interested in the Gonzagas and their Mantua.

It is taken for granted that no human being ever yet gained an idea of any building from the most artful description of it; but if the reader cares to fancy a wide piazza, or open square, with a church upon the left hand, immense, uninteresting edifices on the right, and an ugly bishop's palace, of Renaissance taste, behind him, he may figure before him as vastly and magnificently as he pleases the superb Gothic front of the Castello di Corte. This façade is the only one in Italy that reminds you of the most beautiful building in the world, the Ducal Palace at Venice; and it does this merely by right of its short pillars and deep Gothic arches in the ground story, and the great breadth of wall that rises above them, unbroken by the second line of columns which relieves and lightens this wall in the Venetian palace. It stands at an extremity of the city, upon the edge of the broad fresh-water lagoon, and is of such extent as to include within its walls a whole court-city of theatre, church, stables, play-ground, course for riding, and several streets. There is a far older edifice adjoining the Castello di Corte, which Guido Bonacolsi began, and which witnessed the bloody end of his line, when Louis Gonzaga surprised and slew his last successor. But the palace itself is all the work of the Gonzagas, and it remains the monument of their kingly state and splendid pride.

It was the misfortune of the present writer to be recognized by the *employé* (formerly of Venice) who gives the permissions to travellers to visit the palace, and to be addressed in the presence of the *Custode* by the dignified title to which his presence did so little honor. This circumstance threw upon the *Custode*, a naturally tedious and oppressive old man, the responsibility of being doubly prolix and garrulous. He revelled with pride in his office of showing the palace, and did homage to the visitor's charge and nation by an infinite expansion upon all possible points of interest, lest he should go away imperfectly informed of anything. By dint of frequent encounter with

strangers, this *Custode* had picked up many shreds and fragments of many languages, and did not permit our travellers to consider themselves as having at all understood him until he had repeated everything in Italian, English, French, and German. He led the way with his polyglot babble through an endless number of those magnificent and uninteresting chambers which palaces seem specially built to contain, that men may be content to dwell in the humbler dulness of their own houses; and though the travellers often prayed him to show them the apartments containing the works of Mantegna, they really got to see nothing of this painter's in the Ducal Palace, except, here and there, some evanescent frescoes, which the *Custode* would not go beyond a *si crede* in attributing to him. Indeed, it is known that the works of Mantegna suffered grievously in the wars of the last century, and his memory has faded so dim in this palace where he wrought, that the guide could not understand the curiosity of our foreigners concerning the old painter; and certainly Giulio Romano has stamped himself more ineffaceably than Mantegna upon Mantua.

In the Ducal Palace are seen vividly contrasted the fineness and strength, the delicacy and courage of the fancy, which, rather than the higher gift of imagination, characterize Giulio's work. There is such an airy refinement and subtle grace in the pretty grotesques with which he decorates a chamber; there is such daring luxury of color and design in the pictures for which his grand halls are merely the frames. No doubt we could make fine speeches about these paintings; but who, not seeing them, would be the wiser, after the best description and the choicest critical disquisition? In fact, our travellers themselves found it pleasanter, after a while, to yield to the guidance of the *Custode*, and to enjoy the stupider marvels of the place, than to do the set and difficult admiration of the works of art. So, passing the apartments in good preservation, (the Austrian Emperors have taken good care of some parts of the palace of one of their first Italian possessions,) they did justice to the splendor of the satin beds and the other upholstery work; they admired rich carpentering and costly toys; they dwelt on marvellous tapestries (among which the tapestry copies of Raphael's cartoons, woven at Man-

tua in the fifteenth century, are certainly worthy of wonder); and they expressed the proper amazement at the miracles of art which caused figures frescoed in the ceilings to turn with them, and follow and face them from whatever part of the room they chose to look. Nay, they even enjoyed the Hall of the Rivers, on the sides of which the usual river-gods were painted, in the company of the usual pottery, from which they pour their founts, and at the end of which there was an abominable little grotto of what people call, in modern landscape-gardening, rock-work, out of the despair with which its unmeaning ugliness fills them. There were busts of several Mantuan duchesses in the gallery, which were interesting, and the pictures were so bad as to molest no one. There was, besides all this, a hanging garden in this small Babylon, on which the travelers looked with a doleful regret that they were no longer of the age when a hanging garden would have brought supreme comfort to the soul. It occupied a spacious oblong, had a fountain and statues, trees and flowers, and would certainly have been taken for the surface of the earth, had not the *Cus-tode* proudly pointed out that it was on a level with the second floor, on which they stood.

After that they wandered through a series of unused, dismantled apartments and halls, melancholy with faded fresco, dropping stucco, and mutilated statues of plaster, and came at last upon a balcony overlooking the Cavallerizza, which one of the early dukes built after a design by the inevitable Giulio Romano. It is a large square, and was meant for the diversion of riding on horseback. Balconies go all round it between those thick columns, finely twisted, as we see them in that cartoon of Raphael, "The Healing of the Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple"; and here once stood the jolly dukes and the jolly ladies of their light-hearted court, and there below rode the gay, insolent, intriguing courtiers, and outside groaned the city under the heavy extortions of the tax-gatherers. It is all in weather-worn stucco, and the handsome square is planted with trees. The turf is now cut and carved by the heavy wheels of the Austrian baggage-wagons constantly passing through the court to carry munitions to the fortress outside, whose black guns grimly overlook the dead lagoon. A sense of

desolation had crept over the sight-seers, with that strange sickness of heart which one feels in the presence of ruin not to be lamented, and which deepened into actual pain as the *Custode* clapped his hands and the echo buffeted itself against the forlorn stucco, and up from the trees rose a score of sullen, slumberous owls, and flapped heavily across the lonesome air with melancholy cries. It only needed, to crush these poor strangers, that final touch which the *Custode* gave, as they passed from the palace through the hall in which are painted the Gonzaghi, and in which he pointed out the last Duke of Mantua, saying he was deposed by the Emperor for felony, and somehow conveying the idea of horse-stealing and counterfeiting on the part of his Grace.

A very different man from this rogue was our old friend Lodovico, who also, however, had his troubles. He was an enemy of the Ghibellines, and fought them a great deal. Of course he had the habitual wars with Milan, and he was obliged to do battle with his own brother Carlo to some extent. This Gonzaga had been taken prisoner by Sforza; and Lodovico, having paid for him a ransom of sixty thousand florins of gold, (which Carlo was scarcely worth,) seized the fraternal lands, and held them in pledge of repayment. Carlo could not pay, and tried to get back his possessions by war. Vexed with these and other contentions, Lodovico was also unhappy in his son, whose romance we may best tell in the words of the history* from which we take it.

“Lodovico Gonzaga, having agreed with the Duke of Bavaria to take his daughter Margherita as wife for his (Lodovico's) first-born, Federico, and the young man refusing her, Lodovico was so much enraged that he sought to imprison him; but the Marchioness Barbara, mother of Federico, caused him to fly from the city till his father's anger should be abated. Federico departed with six attendants;† but this flight caused still greater displeasure to his father, who now declared him banished, and threatened with heavy penalties any one who should give him help or favor. Federico, therefore, wandered about with these six attendants in divers places, and finally arrived in Naples; but having already spent all his substance, and not daring to

* Volta, *Storia di Mantova*.

† The *Fioretto delle Cronache* says “persons of gentle condition.”

make himself known for fear of his father, he fell into great want, and so into severe sickness. His companions having nothing wherewith to live, and not knowing any trade by which to gain their bread, did menial services fit for day-laborers, and sustained their lord with their earnings, he remaining hidden in a poor woman's house where they all dwelt.

“The Marchioness had sent many messengers in divers provinces with money to find her son, but they never heard any news of him; so that they thought him dead, not hearing anything, either, of his attendants. Now it happened that one of those who sought Federico came to Naples, and presented himself to the king with a letter from the said lady, praying that he should make search in his territory for a company of seven men, giving the name and description of each. The king caused this search to be made by the heads of the district; and one of these heads told how in his district there were six Lombard men, (not knowing of Federico, who lay ill,) but that they were laborers and of base condition. The king determined to see them; and they being come before him, he demanded who they were, and how many; and as they were not willing to discover their lord, on being asked their names they gave others, so that the king, not being able to learn anything, would have dismissed them. But the messenger sent by the Marchioness knew them, and said to the king, ‘Sire, these are the attendants of him whom I seek; but they have changed their names.’ The king caused them to be separated one from another, and then asked them of their lord; and they, finding themselves separated, minutely narrated everything; and the king immediately sent for Federico, whom his officers found miserably ill on a heap of straw. He was brought to the palace, where the king ordered him to be cared for, sending the messenger back to his mother to advise her how the men had been found, and in what great misery. The Marchioness went to her husband, and, having cast herself at his feet, besought him of a grace. The Marquis answered that he would grant everything, so it did not treat of Federico. Then the lady opened him the letter of the king of Naples, which had such effect that it softened the soul of the Marquis, showing him in how great misery his son had been; and so, giving the letter to the Marchioness, he said, ‘Do that which pleases you.’ The Marchioness straightway sent the prince money, and clothes to clothe him, with order that he should return to Mantua; and having come, the son cast himself at his father's feet, imploring pardon for himself and for his attendants; and he pardoned them, and gave those attendants enough to live honorably and like noblemen, and they were called The Faithful of the House of Gonzaga, and from them come the *Fedeli* of Mantua.

"The Marquis then, not to break faith, caused Federico to take Margherita, daughter of the Duke of Bavaria, for his wife, and celebrated the nuptials splendidly ; so that there remained the greatest love between father and son."

The son succeeded to the father's dominion in 1478 ; and it is recorded of him in the "*Flower of the Chronicles*," that he was a hater of idleness, and a just man, greatly beloved by his people. They chiefly objected to him that he placed a Jew, Eusebio Malatesta, at the head of civil affairs ; and this Jew was indeed the cause of great mischief : for Ridolfo Gonzaga coming to reside with his wife for a time at the court of his brother, the Marquis, Malatesta fell in love with her. She repelled him ; and the bitter Jew thereupon so poisoned her husband's mind with accusations against her chastity, that he took her home to his town of Lazzaro, and there put the unhappy and innocent lady to death by the headsman's hand in the great square of the city.

Federico was Marquis only six years, and died in 1484, leaving his marquisate to his son Francesco, the most ambitious, warlike, restless, splendid prince of his magnificent race. This Gonzaga wore a beard, and brought the custom into fashion in Italy again. He founded the famous breed of Mantuan horses, and gave them about free-handedly to other sovereigns of his acquaintance. To the English king he presented a steed which, if we may trust history, could have been sold for almost its weight in gold. He was so fond of hunting that he kept two hundred dogs of the chase, and one hundred and fifty birds of prey.

Of course this Gonzaga was a soldier, and indeed he loved war better even than hunting, delighting so much in personal feats of arms that, concealing his name and quality, in order that the combat should be in all things equal, he was wont to challenge renowned champions wherever he heard of them, and to meet them in the lists. Great part of his life was spent in the field ; and he fought in turn on nearly all sides of the political questions then agitating Italy. In 1495 he was at the head of the Venetian and other Italian troops when they beat the French under Charles VIII. at Taro, and made so little use of their victory as to let their vanquished invaders escape from

them after all. Nevertheless, if the Gonzaga did not here show himself a great general, he did great feats of personal valor, penetrating to the midst of the French forces, wounding the king, and with his own hand taking prisoner the great Bastard of Bourbon. Venice paid him ten thousand ducats for gaining the victory, such as it was, and when peace was made he went to visit the French king at Vercelli; and there Charles gave his guest a present of two magnificent horses, which the Gonzaga returned yet more splendidly in kind. About five years later he was again at war with the French, and helped the Aragonese drive them out of Naples. In 1506, Pope Julius II. made him leader of the armies of the Church, (for he had now quitted the Venetian service,) and he reduced the city of Bologna to obedience to the Holy See. In 1509 he joined the League of Cambray against Venice, and, being made Imperial Captain-General, was taken prisoner by the Venetians. They liberated him, however, the following year; and in 1513 we find him at the head of the league against the French.

A curious anecdote of this Gonzaga's hospitality is also illustrative of the anomalous life of those times, when good faith had as little to do with the intercourse of nations as at present; but good fortune, when she appeared in the world, liked to put on a romantic and melodramatic guise. An ambassador from the Grand Turk on his way to Rome was robbed of all his money, and left planted, as the Italians expressively say, at Ancona (which was as if Lord Lyons should have fallen among thieves at New York, and had no money left to continue his journey to Washington). The magnificent Gonzaga hears of the Turk's embarrassing mischance, sends and fetches him to Mantua, clothes him, puts abundant money in his purse, and despatches him on his way. The Sultan, in reward of this courtesy to his servant, gave a number of fine horses to the Marquis, who, possibly being tired of presenting his own horses, returned the Porte a ship-load of excellent Mantuan cheeses. This interchange of compliments seems to have led to a kind of romantic friendship between the Gonzaga and the Grand Turk, who did occasionally interest himself in the affairs of the Christian dogs; and who, when Francesco lay prisoner at Venice, actually wrote to the Serenest Senate, and asked his

release as a personal grace to him, the Grand Turk. And Francesco was, thereupon, let go; the canny republic being willing to do the Sultan any sort of cheap favor.

This Gonzaga, being so much engaged in war, seems to have had little time for the adornment of his capital. The Church of Our Lady of Victory is the only edifice which he added to it; and this was merely in glorification of his own triumph over the French at Taro. Mantegna painted an altar-piece for it, representing the Marquis and his wife on their knees before the Virgin, in act to render her thanks for the victory. The French nation avenged itself for whatever wrong was done its pride in this picture by stealing it away from Mantua in Napoleon's time; and it now hangs in the gallery of the Louvre.

Francesco died in 1519; and after him his son, Federico II., the first Duke of Mantua, reigned some twenty-one years, and died in 1540. The marquisate in his time was made a duchy by the Emperor Charles V., to whom the Gonzaga had given efficient aid in his wars against the French. This was in the year 1530; and three years later, when the Duke of Monferrato died, and the inheritance of his opulent little state was disputed by the Duke of Savoy, by the Marquis of Saluzzo, and by the Gonzaga, who had married the late Duke's daughter, Charles's influence secured it to the Mantuan. The dominions of the Gonzagas had now reached their utmost extent, and these dominions were not curtailed till the deposition of Fernando Carlo in 1708, when Monferrato was adjudged to the Duke of Savoy, and afterwards confirmed to him by treaty. It was separated from the capital of the Gonzagas by a wide extent of alien territory; but they held it with a strong hand, embellished (according to the notions of that day) the city, and founded there the strongest citadel in Italy.

Federico, after his wars for the Emperor, appears to have reposed in peace for the rest of his days, and to have devoted himself to the adornment of Mantua and the aggrandizing of his family splendor. His court was the home of many artists; and Titian painted for him the Twelve Cæsars, which the Germans stole when they sacked the city in 1630. But his great agent and best beloved genius was Giulio Pippi, called Romano,

who was conducted to Mantua by pleasant Count Baldassare Castiglione.

Pleasant Count Baldassare Castiglione! whose incomparable book of the *Cortigiano* succeeded in teaching his countrymen every gentlemanly grace but virtue. He was born at Casatico in the Mantovano, in the year 1476, and went in his boyhood to be schooled at Milan, where he learnt the profession of arms. From Milan he went to Rome, where he exercised his profession of arms till the year 1504, when he was called to gentler uses at the court of the elegant Dukes of Urbino. He lived there as courtier and court-poet, and he returned to Rome as the ambassador from Urbino. Meantime his liege, Francesco Gonzaga, was but poorly pleased that so brilliant a Mantuan should spend his life in the service and ornament of other princes; and Castiglione came back to his native country about the year 1516. He married in Mantua, and there finished his famous book of "The Courtier," and succeeded in winning back the favor of his prince. Federico, the Duke, made him ambassador to Rome in 1528; and Baldassare did his master two signal services there, — he procured him to be named head of all the Papal forces, and he found him Giulio Romano. So the Duke suffered him to go as the Pope's Nuncio to Spain, and Baldassare finished his courtly days at Toledo in 1529.

The poet made a detour to Mantua on his way to Spain, taking with him the painter, whom the Duke received with many caresses, as old Vasari says, gave him a house honorably furnished, ordered provision for him and his pupils, gave them certain brave suits of velvet and satin, and, seeing that Giulio had no horse, called for his own favorite Luggieri, and bestowed it on him. Ah! they knew how to receive painters, those fine princes, who had merely to put their hands into their people's pocket, and take out what florins they liked. So the Duke presently set the artist to work, riding out with him through the gate of San Bastiano to some stables about a bow-shot from the walls, in the midst of a flat meadow, where he told Giulio that he would be glad (if it could be done without destroying the old walls) to have such buildings added to the stables as would serve him for a kind of lodge, to come out and merrily sup in when he liked. Whereupon Giulio began to think out the famous Palazzo del T.

This painter is an unlucky kind of man, to whom all criticism seems to have agreed to attribute great power and deny great praise. Castiglione had found him at Rome, after the death of his master Raphael, when his genius, for good or for ill, began for the first time to utter itself in original expression. At Mantua, where he spent all the rest of his busy life, it is impossible not to feel in some degree the force of this genius. As in Venice all the Madonnas in the street-corner shrines have some touch of color to confess the painter's subjection to Titian or Tintoretto; as in Vicenza the edifices are all in Greekish taste, and stilted upon rustic basements in honor and homage to Palladio; as in Parma Correggio has never died, but lives to this day in the mouths and chiaro-scuro effects of all the figures in all the pictures painted there;—so in Mantua Giulio Romano is to be found in the lines of every painting and every palace. It is wonderful to see, in these little Italian cities which have been the homes of great men, how no succeeding generation has dared to wrong the memory of them by departing in the least from their precepts upon art. One fancies, for instance, the immense scorn with which the Vicentines would greet the audacity of any young architect who dared to think Gothic instead of Palladian Greek, and how they would put him to shame by asking him if he knew more than Palladio about architecture! It seems that original art cannot arise in the presence of the great virtues and the great errors of the past; and Italian art of this day seems incapable of even the feeble, mortal life of other modern art, in the midst of so much immortality.

Giulio Romano did a little of everything for the Dukes of Mantua,—from painting the most delicate and improper little fresco for a bed-chamber, to restraining the Po and the Mincio with immense dikes, restoring ancient edifices and building new ones, draining swamps and demolishing and reconstructing whole streets, painting palaces and churches, and designing the city slaughter-house. He grew old and very rich in the service of the Gonzagas; but though Mrs. Jameson says he commanded respect by a sense of his own dignity as an artist, the Bishop of Casale, who wrote the *Annali di Mantova*, says that the want of nobility and purity in his style, and his “gal-

lant inventions, were conformable to his own sensual life, and that he did not disdain to prostitute himself to the infamies of Aretino," — whatever this may mean.

His great architectural work in Mantua is the Palazzo del T, or Tè, as it is now written. It was first called Palazzo del T, from the convergence of roads there in the form of that letter; and the modern Mantuans call it Del Tè, from the superstition, transmitted to us by the *Custode* of the Ducal Palace, that the Gonzagas merely used it on pleasant afternoons to take tea in! so curiously has latter-day guidemanship interpreted the jolly purpose expressed by the Duke to Giulio. We say nothing to control the reader's choice between T and Tè, and merely adhere to the elder style out of reverence for the past. It is certain that the air of the plain on which the palace stands is most unwholesome, and it may have been true that the dukes never passed the night there. Federico did not intend to build more than a lodge in this place; but fascinated with the design offered him by Giulio, he caused the artist to go on, and contrive him a palace instead. It stands, as Vasari says, about a good bow-shot from one of the city's gates; and going out to see the palace on our second day in Mantua, we crossed a drawbridge guarded by Austrian soldiers. Below languished a bed of sullen ooze, tangled and thickly grown with long, villanous grasses, and sending up a damp and deathly stench, which made all the faces we saw look feverish and sallow. Already at that early season the air was foul and heavy, and the sun, faintly making himself seen through the dun sky of the dull spring day, seemed sick to look upon the place, where indeed the only happy and lively things were the clouds of gnats that danced before us, and welcomed us to the Palazzo del T. Damp fosses surround the palace, in which these gnats seemed to have peculiar pleasure; and they took possession of the portico of the stately entrance of the edifice as we went in, and held it faithfully till we returned.

In one of the first large rooms are the life-size portraits of the six finest horses of the Gonzaga stud, painted by the pupils of Giulio Romano, after the master's designs. The paintings attest the beauty of the Mantuan horses, and the pride and fondness of their ducal owners; and trustworthy critics have

praised their eminent truth. But it is only the artist or the hippanthrop who can delight in them long; and we presently left them for the other chambers, in which the invention of Giulio had been used to please himself rather than his master. We scarcely mean to name the wonders of the palace, having, indeed, general associations with them, rather than particular recollections of them.

One of the most famous rooms is the Chamber of Psyche (the apartments are not of great size), of which the ceiling is by Giulio and the walls are by his pupils. The whole illustrates, with every variety of fantastic invention, the story of Psyche, as told by Apuleius, and deserves to be curiously studied as a part of the fair outside of a superb and corrupt age, the inside of which was full of rottenness. The civilization of Italy, as a growth from the earliest Pagan times, and only modified by Christianity and the admixture of Northern blood and thought, is yet to be carefully analyzed; and until this analysis is made, discussion of certain features must necessarily be incomplete and unsatisfactory. No one, however, can stand in this Chamber of Psyche, and not feel how great reality the old mythology must still have had, not only for the artists who painted the room, but for the people who inhabited it and enjoyed it. We do not say that they believed it as they believed in the vital articles of Christian faith, but that they accepted it with the same spirit as they accepted the martyrology of the Church; and that to the fine gentlemen and ladies of the court, those jolly satyrs and careless nymphs, those Cupids and Psyches, and Dianas and Venuses, were of the same verity as the fathers of the desert, the Devil, and the great body of the saints. If they did not pray to them, they swore by them, and their names were much oftener on their lips; and the art of the time was so thoroughly Pagan, that it forgot all Christian holiness, and clung only to heathen beauty. When it had not actually a mythologic subject to deal with, it paganized Christian themes. St. Sebastian was made to look like Apollo, and Magdalene was merely a tearful, triste Venus. There is scarcely a ray of feeling in Italian art since Raphael's time which suggests Christianity in the artist, or teaches it to the beholder. In confessedly Pagan subjects it was happiest,

as in the life of Psyche, in this room ; and here it inculcated a gay and spirited license, and an elegant absence of delicacy, which is still observable everywhere in Italian life. It would be instructive to know in what spirit the common Mantuans of his day looked upon the inventions of the painter, and how far the courtly circle which frequented this room went in discussion and comment on its subjects ; they were not nice people, and probably had no nasty ideas about the unspeakable indecency of some of the scenes.*

Returning to the city we visited the house of Giulio Romano, which stands in one of the fine, lonesome streets, and at the outside of which we looked. The artist designed it himself ; and it is very pretty, with delicacy of feeling in the fine stucco ornamentation, but is not otherwise interesting.

We passed it, continuing our way toward the Arsenal, near which we had seen the women at work washing the linen coats of the garrison in the twilight of the evening before ; and we now saw them again from the bridge, on which we paused to look at a picturesque bit of modern life in Mantua. The washing-machine (when the successful instrument is invented) may do its work as well, but not so charmingly, as these Mantuan girls did. They washed the linen in a clear, swift-running stream, diverted from the dam of the Mincio to furnish mill-power within the city wall ; and we could look down the water-course past old arcades of masonry half submerged in it, past pleasant angles of houses and a lazy mill-wheel turning slowly, slowly, till our view ended in the gallery of a time-worn palace, through the columns of which was seen the blue sky. Under the bridge the stream ran very strong and lucid, over long, green, undulating water-grasses, which it loved to dimple over and play with. On the right were the laundresses under the eaves of a wooden shed, each kneeling, as their custom is, in a three-sided box, and leaning forward over the washboard that

* The ruin in the famous room frescoed with the Fall of the Giants commences on the very door-jambs, which are painted in broken and tumbling brick-work ; and throughout there is a prodigiousness which does not surprise, and a bigness which does not impress ; and the treatment of the subject can only be expressed by the Westernism *powerfully weak*. In Kugler's *Hand-Book of Italian Painting* are two illustrations, representing parts of the fresco, which give a fair idea of the whole.

sloped down into the water. As they washed they held the linen in one hand, and rubbed it with the other ; then heaped it into a mass upon the board, and beat it with great two-handed blows of a stick. They sang, meanwhile, one of those plaintive airs of which the Italian peasants are fond, and which rose in indescribable pathos, pulsing with their blows, and rhythmic with the graceful movement of their forms. Many of the women were young, — though they were of all ages, — and the prettiest among them was third from where we stood upon the bridge. She caught sight of the sketch-book which one of the travellers carried, and pointed it out to the rest, who could hardly settle to their work to be sketched. Presently an idle baker, whose shop adjoined the bridge, came out and leaned upon the parapet, and bantered the girls. “ They are drawing the prettiest,” he said, at which they all bridled a little ; and she who knew herself to be prettiest hung her head and rubbed furiously at the linen. Long before the artist had finished the sketch, the lazy, good-humored crowd which the public practice of the fine arts always attracts in Italy, had surrounded the strangers, and were applauding, commenting, comparing, and absorbing every stroke as it was made. When the book was closed and they walked away, a number of boys straggled after them some paces, inspired by a curious longing and regret, like that which leads boys to the eager inspection of fireworks when they have gone out. We lost them at the first turning of the street, whither the melancholy chorus of the women’s song had also followed us, and where it died pathetically away.

In the evening we walked to the Piazza Virgiliana, the beautiful space laid out and planted with trees by the French, at the beginning of this century, in honor of the great Mantuan poet. One of its bounds is the shore of the lake which surrounds the city, and from which now rose ghostly vapors on the still twilight air. Down the slow, dull current moved one of the picturesque black boats of the Po ; and beyond, the level landscape had a pleasant desolation that recalled the scenery of the Middle Mississippi. It might have been here in this very water that the first-born of our first Duke of Mantua fell from his boat while hunting water-fowl in 1550, and took a fever of which he died only a short time after his accession to the sov-

ereignty of the duchy. At any rate, the fact of the accident brings us back from lounging up and down Mantua to our grave duty of chronicler. Francesco's father had left him in childhood to the care of his uncle, the Cardinal Hercules, who ruled Mantua with a firm and able hand, increasing the income of the state, spending less upon the ducal stud, and cutting down the number of mouths at the ducal table from eight hundred to three hundred and fifty-one. His justice tended to severity rather than mercy ; but reformers of our own time will augur well of his heart, that he founded in that time a place of refuge and retirement for abandoned women. Good Catholics will also be pleased to know that he was very efficient in suppressing the black heresy of Calvin, which had crept into Mantua in his day, — probably from Ferrara, where the black heretic himself was then, or about then, in hiding under the protection of the ill-advised Marchioness Renée. The good Cardinal received the Pope's applause for his energy in this matter, and we doubt not his hand fell heavily on the Calvinists. Of the Duke who died so young, the Venetian ambassador thought it worth while to write, what we think it worth while to quote as illustrating the desire of the Senate to have careful knowledge of its neighbors: "He is a boy of melancholy complexion. His eyes are full of spirit, but he does not delight in childish things, and seems secretly proud of being lord. He has an excellent memory, and shows much inclination for letters."

His brother Guglielmo, who succeeded him in 1550, seems to have had the same affection for learning ; but he was wilful, harsh, and cruelly ambitious, and cared, an old writer says, for nothing so much as perpetuating the race of the Gonzagas in Mantua. He was a hunchback, and some of his family (who could not have understood his character) tried to persuade him not to assume the ducal dignity ; but his haughty temper soon righted him in their esteem, and it is said that all the courtiers put on humps in honor of the Duke. He was not a great warrior, and there are few picturesque incidents in his reign. Indeed, nearly the last of these in Mantuan history was the coronation at Mantua of the excellent poet Lodovico Ariosto, by Charles V., in 1532, Federico II. reigning. But the Mantuans of Guglielmo's day were not without their sen-

sations, for three Japanese ambassadors passed through their city on the way to Rome, when it is to be supposed the Mantuan ladies made much of the attendant Tommy. They were also awakened to religious zeal by the reappearance of Protestantism among them. The heresy was happily suppressed by the Inquisition, acting under Pius V., though with small thanks to Duke William, who seems to have taken no fervent part in the persecutions. "The proceedings," says Cantù, writing before our national complicity with slavery had ceased, "were marked by those punishments which free America inflicts upon the negroes to-day, and which a high conception of this mission of the Church moves us to deplore." The Duke must have made haste after this to reconcile himself with the Church; for we read that two years later he was permitted to take a particle of the blood of Christ from the church of St. Andrea to that of Sta. Barbara, where he deposited it in a box of crystal and gold, and caused his statue to be placed before the shrine in the act of adoring the relic.

Duke William managed his finances so well as to leave his spendthrift son Vincenzo a large sum of money to make way with after his death. Part of this, indeed, he had earned by obedience to his father's wishes in the article of matrimony. The prince was in love with the niece of the Duke of Bavaria, very lovely and certainly high-born enough, but having unhappily only sixty thousand crowns to her portion. So she was not to be thought of, and Vincenzo married the sister of the Duke of Parma, of whom he grew so fond, that, though two years of marriage brought them no children, he could scarce be persuaded to suffer her divorce on account of sterility. This happened, however, and the prince's affections were next engaged by the daughter of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. The lady had a portion of three hundred thousand crowns, which entirely charmed the frugal-minded Duke William, and Vincenzo married her, after certain diplomatic preliminaries demanded by the circumstances, which scarcely bear statement in English, and which the present history would blush to give even in Italian.

Indeed, he was a great beast, this splendid Vincenzo, both by his own fault and that of others; but it ought to be remem-

bered of him, that at his solicitation the most clement lord of Ferrara liberated from durance in the hospital of St. Anna his poet Tasso, whom he had kept shut in that madhouse seven years. On his delivery, Tasso addressed his *Discorso* to Vincenzo's kinsman, the learned Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga; and to this prelate he submitted for correction the *Gerusalemme*, as did Guarini his *Pastor Fido*.

When Vincenzo came to power he found a fat treasury, which he enjoyed after the fashion of the time, and which, having a princely passion for every costly pleasure, he soon emptied. He was crowned in 1587; and on his coronation day rode through the streets throwing gold to the people, after the manner of the Mantuan Dukes. He kept up an army of six thousand men, among a population of eighty thousand all told; and maintained as his guard "fifty archers on horseback, who also served with the arquebuse, and fifty light-horsemen for the guard of his own person, who were all excellently mounted, the Duke possessing such a noble stud of horses that he always had five hundred at his service, and kept in stable one hundred and fifty of marvellous beauty." He lent the Spanish king two hundred thousand pounds out of his father's sparings; and when the Archduchess of Austria, Margherita, passed through Mantua on her way to wed Philip II. of Spain, he gave her a diamond ring worth twelve thousand crowns. Next after women, he was madly fond of the theatre, and spent immense sums for actors. He would not, indeed, cede in splendor to the greatest monarchs, and in his reign of fifteen years he squandered fifty million crowns! No one will be surprised to learn from a contemporary writer in Mantua, that this excellent prince was adorned with all the Christian virtues; nor to be told by a later historian, that in Vincenzo's time Mantua was the most corrupt city in Europe. A satire of the year 1601, which this writer (Maffei) reduces to prose, says of that period: "Everywhere in Mantua are seen feasts, jousts, masks, banquets, plays, music, balls, delights, dancing. To these, the young girls," an enormity in Italy, "as well as the matrons, go in magnificent dresses; and even the churches are scenes of love-making. Good mothers, instead of teaching their daughters the use of the needle, teach them the arts of rouging,

dress, singing, and dancing. Naples and Milan scarcely produce silk enough, nor India and Peru gold and gems enough, to deck out female impudence and pride. Courtiers and warriors perfume themselves as delicately as ladies; and even the food is scented, that the mouth may exhale fragrance. The galleries and halls of the houses are painted full of the loves of Mars and Venus, Leda and the Swan, Jove and Danae, while the devout solace themselves with the sacred subjects of Beer-sheba in the Bath, and Susannah and the Elders. The flower of chastity seems withered in Mantua. No longer in Lydia nor in Cyprus, but in Mantua, is fixed the realm of pleasure." The Mantuans were a different people in the old republican times, when a fine was imposed for blasphemy, and the blasphemous put into a basket and drowned in the lake, if he did not pay within fifteen days; which must have made profanity a luxury even to the rich. But in that day a man had to pay twenty soldi (seventy-five cents) if he spoke to a woman in church; and women were not allowed even the moderate diversion of going to funerals, and could not wear silk lace about the neck, nor have dresses that dragged more than a yard, nor crowns of pearls or gems, nor belts worth more than ten livres (twenty-five dollars), nor purses worth more than fifteen soldi (fifty cents.)

Possibly as an antidote for the corruption brought into the world with Vincenzo, there was another Gonzaga born about the same period, who became in due time Saint Louis Gonzaga, and remains to this day one of the most powerful friends of virtue to whom a good Catholic can pray. He is particularly recommended by his biographer, the Jesuit Father Cesari, in cases of carnal temptation; and improving stories are told Italian youth of the miracles he works under such circumstances. He vowed chastity for his own part at an age when most children do not know good from evil, and he carried the fulfilment of this vow to such extreme, that, being one day at play of forfeits with other boys and girls, and being required to kiss—not one of the little maidens—but her *shadow* on the wall, he would not, but preferred to lose his pawn. Everybody, we think, will agree with Father Cesari that it would be hard to draw chastity finer than this.

St. Luigi Gonzaga descended from that Ridolfo who put his wife to death, and his father was Marquis of Castiglione delle Stivene. He was born in 1568, and, being the first son, was heir to the marquisate; but from his earliest years he had a call to the Church. His family did everything possible to dissuade him—his father with harshness, and his uncle, Duke William of Mantua, with tenderness—from his vocation. The latter even sent a “bishop of rare eloquence” to labor with the boy at Castiglione; but everything was done in vain. In due time Luigi joined the Company of Jesus, renounced this world, and died at Rome in the odor of sanctity, after doing such good works as surprised every one. His brother Ridolfo succeeded to the marquisate, and fell into a quarrel with Duke William about lands, which dispute Luigi composed before his death. About all which the reverend Jesuit Father Tolomei has shown how far heaviness can go in the dramatic form, and has written a pitiless play, wherein everybody goes into a convent with the fall of the curtain. Till the reader has read this play, he has never (properly speaking) been bored. For the happiness of mankind, it has not been translated out of the original Italian.

From the time of the first Vincenzo’s death, there are only two tragic events which lift the character of Mantuan history above the quality of *chronique scandaleuse*, namely, the Duke Ferdinand’s repudiation of Camilla Faa di Casale, and the sack of Mantua in 1630. The first of these events followed close upon the demise of the splendid Vincenzo; for his son Francesco reigned but a short time, and died, leaving a little daughter of three years to the guardianship of her uncle, the Cardinal Ferdinand. The law of the Mantuan succession excluded females; and Ferdinand, dispensed from his ecclesiastical functions by the Pope, ascended the ducal throne. In 1615, not long after his accession, as the chronicles relate, in passing through a chamber of the palace he saw a young girl playing upon a cithern, and being himself young, and of the ardent temper of the Gonzagas, he fell in love with the fair minstrel. She was the daughter of a noble servant of the Duke, who had once been his ambassador to the court of the Duke of Savoy, and was called Count Ardizzo Faa Monferrino

di Casale ; but his grace did not on that account hesitate to attempt corrupting her : indeed, a courtly father of that day might well be supposed to have few scruples that would interfere with a gracious sovereign's designs upon his daughter. Singularly enough, the chastity of Camilla was so well guarded that the ex-cardinal was at last forced to propose marriage. It seems that the poor girl loved her ducal wooer ; and besides, the ducal crown was a glittering temptation, and she consented to a marriage which, for state and family reasons, was made secret. When the fact was bruited, it raised the wrath and ridicule of Ferdinand's family, and the Duke's sister Margaret, Duchess of Ferrara, had so lofty a disdain of his *mésalliance* with an inferior, that she drove her to desperation with her sarcasms. About this time Camilla's father died, with strong evidences of poisoning ; and the wife being left helpless and friendless, her noble husband resorted to the artifice of feigning that there had never been any marriage, and thus sought to appease his family. Unhappily, however, he had given her a certificate of matrimony, which she refused to surrender when he put her away, so that the Duke, desiring afterwards to espouse the daughter of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, was obliged to present a counterfeit certificate to his bride, who believed it the real marriage contract, and destroyed it. When the Duchess discovered the imposition, she would not rest till she had wrung the real document from Camilla, under the threat of putting her son to death. The miserable mother then retired to a convent, and died of a broken heart, while Ferdinand bastardized his only legitimate son, a noble boy, whom his mother had prettily called Jacinth. After this, a kind of retribution, amid all his political successes, seems to have pursued the guilty Duke. His second wife was too fat to bear children, but not to bear malice ; and she never ceased to distrust and reproach the Duke, whom she could not believe in anything since the affair of the counterfeit marriage contract. She was very religious, and embittered Ferdinand's days with continued sermons and reproofs, and made him order, in the merry Mantuan court, all the devotions commanded by her confessor.

So Ferdinand died childless, and, it is said, in sore remorse, and was succeeded in 1626 by his brother Vincenzo, another

hope of the faith and light of the Church. His brief reign lasted but one year, and was ignoble as it was brief, and fitly ended the direct line of the Gonzagas. Vincenzo, though an ecclesiastic, never studied anything, and was disgracefully ignorant. Lacking the hereditary love of letters, he had not the warlike boldness of his race; and resembled his ancestors only in the love he bore to horses, hunting, and women. He was enamored of the widow of one of his kinsmen, a woman no longer young, but of still agreeable person, strong will, and quick wit, and of a fascinating presence, which Vincenzo could not resist. The excellent prince was wooing her, with a view to seduction, when he received the nomination of cardinal from Pope Paul V. He pressed his suit, but the lady would consent to nothing but marriage, and Vincenzo bundled up the cardinal's purple and sent it back, with a very careless and ill-mannered letter to the ireful Pope, who swore never to make another Gonzaga cardinal. He then married the widow, but soon wearied of her, and spent the rest of his days in vain attempts to secure a divorce, in order to be restored to his ecclesiastical benefices. And one Christmas morning *he* died childless; and three years later the famous sack of Mantua took place. The events leading to this crime are part of one of the most complicated episodes of Italian history.

Ferdinand, as guardian of his brother's daughter Maria, claimed the Duchy of Monferrato as part of his dominion; but his claim was disputed by Maria's grandfather, the Duke of Savoy, who contended that it reverted to him on the death of his daughter, as a feudatory which had been added to Mantua merely by the intermarriage of the Gonzagas with his family. He was supported in this claim by the Spaniards, then at Milan. The Venetians and the German Emperor supported Ferdinand, and the French advanced the claim of a third, a descendant of Lodovico Gonzaga, who had left Mantua a century before, and entered upon the inheritance of the Duchy of Nevers-Rethel. The Duke of Savoy was one of the boldest of his warlike race; and the Italians had great hopes of him as one great enough to drive the barbarians out of Italy. But nearly three centuries more were wanted to raise his race to the magnitude of a national purpose; and Carlo Emanuel spent

his greatness in disputes with the petty princes about him. In this dispute for Monferrato he was worsted ; for at the treaty of Pavia, Monferrato was assured to Duke Ferdinand of Mantua.

Ferdinand afterwards died without issue, and Vincenzo likewise died childless ; and Charles Gonzaga of Nevers-Rethel, who had married Maria, Ferdinand's ward, became heir to the Duchy of Mantua, but his right was disputed by Ferrante Gonzaga of Guastalla. Charles hurriedly and half secretly introduced himself into Mantua, without consultation with Venetian, Spaniard, or German. While Duke Olivares of Spain was meditating his recognition, his officer at Milan tried to seize Mantua, and failed ; but the German Emperor had been even more deeply offended, and claimed the remission of Charles's rights as a feudatory of the Roman Empire, until he should have regularly invested him. Charles prepared for defence. Meanwhile Spain and Savoy seized Monferrato, but they were afterwards defeated by the French, and the Spanish Milanese was overrun by the Venetians and Mantuans. The German Emperor then sent down his Landsknechts, and in 1630 besieged Mantua, while the French promised help and gave none, and the Pope exhorted Charles to submit. The Venetians, occupied with the Uskok pirates, could do little in his defence. To the horrors of this unequal and desperate war were added those of famine ; and the Jews, passing between the camp and the city, brought a pest from the army into Mantua, which raged with extraordinary violence among the hungry and miserable people. In vain they formed processions, and carried the blood of Christ about the city. So many died, that there were not boats enough to bear them away to their sepulture in the lakes, and the bodies rotted in the streets. There was not wanting at this time the presence of a traitor in the devoted city ; and that this wretch was a Swiss will be a matter of no surprise. The despicable valor of these republicans has everywhere formed the best defence of tyrants, and their fidelity has always been at the service of the highest bidder. The recreant was a lieutenant in the Swiss Guard of the Duke ; and when he had led the Germans into Mantua, and received the reward of his infamy, two German soldiers, placed over him for his protection, killed him and plundered him of his spoil.

The sack now began, and lasted three days, with unspeakable horrors. The Germans (the most slavish and merciless of soldiers) violated Mantuan women, and then buried their victims alive. The harlots of their camp cast off their rags, and, robing themselves in the richest spoils they could find, rioted with brutal insult through the streets, and added the shame of drunken orgies to the dreadful scene of blood and tears; nay, it is said that, in their infernal rage, they roasted and ate the flesh of those dead of the plague. The Jews were driven forth almost naked from the Ghetto. The precious monuments of ages were destroyed; or such as the fury of the soldiers spared, the avarice of their generals consumed; and pictures, statues, and other works of art were stolen and carried away. The churches were plundered, the sacred houses of religion were sacked, and the nuns who did not meet a worse fate went begging through the streets.

The imperial general, Aldringher, had, immediately upon entering the city, appropriated the Ducal Palace to himself as his share of the booty. He placed a strong guard around it, and spoiled it at leisure and systematically, and gained fabulous sums from the robbery. After the sack was ended, he levied upon the population (from whom his soldiers had forced everything that terror and torture could wring from them) four contributions, amounting to a hundred thousand doubloons. This population had, during the siege and sack, been reduced from thirty to twelve thousand; and Aldringher had so thoroughly accomplished his part of the spoliation, that the Duke Charles, returning after the withdrawal of the Germans, could not find in the Ducal Palace so much as a bench to sit upon. He and his family had fled half naked from their beds on the entry of the Germans, and, after a pause in the citadel, had withdrawn to Ariano, whence the Duke sent ambassadors to Vienna to expose his miserable fate to the Emperor. The conduct of Aldringher was severely rebuked at the capital; and the Empress sent Carlo's wife ten thousand sequins, with which they returned at length to Mantua. It is melancholy to read how his neighbors had to compassionate his destitution; how the Grand-Duke of Tuscany sent him upholstery for two state chambers; how the Duke of Parma supplied his table-

service ; how Alfonso of Modena gave him a hundred pairs of oxen, and as many peasants to till his desolated lands. His people always looked upon him with evil eyes, as the cause of their woes ; and after a reign of ten years he died of a broken heart, or, as some thought, of poison.

Carlo had appointed as his successor his nephew and namesake, who succeeded to the throne ten years after his uncle's death, the princess Maria Gonzaga being regent during his minority. Carlo II. early manifested the amorous disposition of his blood, but his reign was not distinguished by remarkable events. He was of imperial politics during those interminable French-Austrian wars, and the French desolated his dominions more or less. In the time of this Carlo II., we read of the Jews being condemned to pay the wages of the Duke's archers for the extremely improbable crime of killing some Hebrews who had been converted ; and there is account of the Duchess going on foot to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace, to render thanks for her son's recovery from a fever, and her daughter's recovery from the bite of a monkey. Mantua must also have regained something of its former gayety ; for in 1652 the Austrian Archdukes and the Medici spent Carnival there. Carlo II. died, like his father, with suspicions of poisoning, and undoubted evidences of debauchery. He was a generous and amiable prince ; and, though a shameless profligate, was beloved by his subjects, to whom, no doubt, his profligacy was not a reproach.

Ferdinand Carlo, whose ignoble reign lasted from 1665 to 1708, was the last and basest of his race. The histories of his country do not attribute a single virtue to this unhappy prince, who seems to have united in himself all the vices of all the Gonzagas. He was licentious and depraved as the first Vincenzo, and he had not Vincenzo's courage ; he was luxurious as the second Francesco, but had no ray of his generosity ; he taxed his people heavily that he might meanly enjoy their substance without making them even the poor return of national glory ; he was grasping as Guglielmo, but saved nothing to the state ; he was as timid as the second Vincenzo, and yet made a feint of making war, and went to Hungary at one time to fight against the Turk. But he loved far better to go

to Venice in his gilded barge, and to spend his Carnivals amid the infinite variety of that city's dissoluteness. He was so ignorant as scarcely to be able to write his name; but he knew all vicious things from his cradle, as if, indeed, he had been gifted to know them by instinct through the profligacy of his parents. It is said that even the then degraded Mantuans blushed to be ruled by so dull and ignorant a wretch; but in his time, nevertheless, Mantua was all rejoicings, promenades, pleasure-voyages, and merry-makings. "The Duke recruited women from every country to stock his palace," says an Italian author, "where they played, sang, and made merry at his will and theirs." "In Venice," says Volta, "he surrendered himself to such diversions without shame, or stint of expense. He not only took part in all public entertainments and pleasures of that capital, but he held a most luxurious and gallant court of his own; and all night long his palace was the scene of theatrical representations by dissolute women, with music and banqueting, so that he had a worse name than Sardanapalus of old." He sneaked away to these gross delights in 1700, while the Emperor was at war with the Spaniards, and left his Duchess (a brave and noble woman, the daughter of Ferrante Gonzaga, Duke of Guastalla) to take care of the duchy, then in great part occupied by Spanish and French forces. This was the War of the Spanish Succession; and it used up poor Ferdinand, who had not a shadow of interest in it. He had sold the fortress of Casale to the French in 1681, feigning that they had taken it from him by fraud; and now he declared that he was forced to admit eight thousand French and Spanish troops into Mantua. Perhaps indeed he was, but the Emperor never would believe it; and he pronounced Ferdinand guilty of felony against the Empire, and deposed him from his duchy. The Duke appealed against this sentence to the Diet of Ratisbon, and, pending the Diet's decision, made a journey of pleasure to France, where the Grand Monarch named him generalissimo of the French forces in Italy, though he never commanded them. He came back to Mantua after a little, and built himself a splendid theatre, — the cheerful Duke.

But his end was near. The French and Austrians made peace in 1707; and next year, Monferrato having fallen to Sa-

voy, the Austrians entered Mantua, whence the Duke promptly fled. The Austrians marched into Mantua on the 29th of February, that being leap-year, and Ferdinand came back no more. Indeed, trusting in false hopes of restoration held out to him by Venice and France, he died on the 5th of the July following, at Padua, — it was said by poison, but more probably of sin and sorrow. So ended Ducal Mantua.

The Austrians held the city till 1797. The French Revolution took it and kept it till 1799, and then left it to the Austrians for two years. Then the Cisalpine Republic possessed it till 1802; and then it was made part of the Kingdom of Italy, and so continued twelve years; after which it fell again to Austria. In 1848, there was a revolution, and the Austrian soldiers stole the precious silver case that held the phial of the true blood. Austria still keeps the place, and Mantua the fortress is stronger than ever before. As for Mantua the people, it is dead.

ART. IV. — 1. *The Currency Question. Letters to the Honorable Schuyler Colfax.* By HENRY C. CAREY. Philadelphia. 1865.

2. *Report of the Comptroller of the Currency for 1864.*

3. *Remarks on Specie Reserves and Bank Deposits.* By FRANCIS BOWEN. (Memoirs of the American Academy, Vol. VIII.)

THE Rebellion has left us with an enormous debt and an excessively complicated currency. The former must be paid, the latter regulated. The two are so intimately connected, however, that it is difficult entirely to separate the consideration of them. At present we regulate the currency only by contracting or changing the form of debts; and in future its regulation must be affected by the mode of paying the debt. But there are two propositions respecting the debt which can be sustained independently of considerations of the currency. They are, —